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### **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Sen. Thompson introduces MARTA expansion bill**

**ATLANTA-** Sen. Curt Thompson (D-Tucker) has introduced *Senate Bill 322*, which will allow the expansion of MARTA service districts to include rail lines. Currently, MARTA service districts, which are contracts to serve only part of a county or city outside of Fulton and DeKalb counties, can only provide bus service but not rail service. Sen. Thompson's bill would allow MARTA service districts to provide bus and rail, rail only or bus only services. *SB 322* is significant because some counties may want to consider bringing MARTA rail service into a portion of their county, but may not want to bring MARTA to their entire county, along with the one penny sales tax that such an expansion would require.



“This legislation will allow suburban counties, such as Gwinnett, Cobb and Clayton, the flexibility to consider bringing MARTA rail service to parts of their counties. In some counties such as Gwinnett, MARTA rail service may be very appropriate in places like Norcross, but not for places like Grayson and we need the flexibility to deal with that fact,” Sen. Thompson said. “It is important for us to take a close look at these transportation issues, and this will allow us to proceed without burdening the citizens with extra taxation.”

Currently, there is only one MARTA service district that provides a bus line into Cobb County to connect with the Cobb County Transit service (CCT). SB 322 would allow counties like Gwinnett to consider bringing MARTA into the 85 Corridor towards Gwinnett Place Mall, or Cobb County to bring the MARTA rail line to places like the Cumberland/Galleria area, without having to scrap their local bus service or bring MARTA into their entire counties.

Using a service district to bring MARTA rail service into part of a county would not require a countywide referendum or a one penny sales tax, provided other revenue sources can be found.

SB322 has been introduced in the Senate and assigned to the Urban Affairs Committee.

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*Sen. Curt Thompson represents the 5<sup>th</sup> Senate District which includes portions of DeKalb and Gwinnett counties. He may be reached by phone at 404.463.1318 or by e-mail at [curt.thompson@senate.ga.gov](mailto:curt.thompson@senate.ga.gov).*